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STATE FOR NEA/ELA (NAFZIGER)
STATE FOR AIWG (WINN)

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [TBIO](#) [KSCA](#) [KFLU](#) [ECON](#) [EAGR](#) [PGOV](#) [EG](#)
SUBJECT: EGYPT AVIAN INFLUENZA: FIRST CASE OF 2008

REF: A. CAIRO 0021

[1](#)B. 07 CAIRO 3546

Sensitive but unclassified. Please handle accordingly.

[1](#)1. (SBU) Summary: Egypt has confirmed its first Human Avian Influenza (AI) case in 2008: a four-year-old girl from the Minya governorate who is currently hospitalized in Cairo. Reacting rapidly and thoroughly, the Ministry of Health and Population (MOHP) and the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) dispatched teams to the area on February 26. Egypt's first AI case this year comes amid reports from the MOHP and the MOA about the ongoing challenge of controlling poultry movement, unsanitary markets and butcher shops, and the presence of H5N1 virus in farm flocks previously thought to be vaccinated. Egypt has now reported 44 confirmed cases of AI -- 19 of them fatal. End summary.

[1](#)2. (SBU) The girl's symptoms started February 21, but she was not hospitalized until February 24. Doctors administered Tamiflu after admission, and then transferred her to Cairo on February 25. According to Dr. Abdel Nasser, MOHP, the girl, from the village of El-Sheikh Massoud, El-Edwa district, is now in moderate condition at Manshyet El-Bakry General Hospital in Cairo suffering from pneumonia and a collapsed lung, but her treating physicians expect her to recover. NAMRU-3 confirms that she was infected with the H5N1 virus.

[1](#)3. (SBU) MOA's "Rapid Response Team," including an epidemiologist and two laboratory technicians, collected samples, conducted interviews, and created a map of the village. According to their investigation, the girl's family bought live ducks on or about February 10, and slaughtered them on February 18. Several families live in the girl's house; MOHP has over 20 individuals under surveillance. MOA tested the samples collected and found the H5N1 virus was present in birds from surrounding households. USAID's Avian and Pandemic Influenza Technical Team Leader is visiting Cairo and is actively involved in the response efforts. Dr. Gavin Macgregor Skinner is encouraged by the joint, rapid MOHP/MOA response and the strength of the MOA's epidemiological investigation. Community for Healthy Living (CHL), a USAID contractor, also sent a team to Minya and will be conducting an AI awareness campaign over the course of the next several days. NAMRU-3 is ready to provide on-site technical assistance, but the GOE has not asked for it at this point.

[1](#)4. (SBU) MOHP survey teams continue to encounter uncontrolled trucking of poultry across the country, as well as unhygienic open poultry markets and butcher shops. MOA contacts report surveillance teams are getting better cooperation from local authorities in recent months and, as a

result, more reliable poultry farm test results. According to one contact, "We are now testing the right birds." MOA tests in December and January detected the virus in farm birds in eight of the twenty two governorates where tests were conducted. MOA sources report that engaging local political leaders to address the AI threat remains a challenge because the politicians believe bird flu in their areas reflects badly upon them. The Governor of Minya, however, has been very supportive of the GOE's campaign against the disease and is cooperating closely with MOHP and MOA.

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